

WorkFirst Reform Partnership Training

WorkFirst Comprehensive Evaluation April 2006

Governor Gregoire's Directive

- Renewed sense of mission.
- Reform the program to achieve better success for parents through community partnerships to weave a tighter safety net.
- WorkFirst must improve and provide supports to help parents find jobs and keep jobs, including child care.
- Parents must participate in the program or lose support
- The state will use Government Management, Accountability and Performance (GMAP) to oversee the program's results and outcomes.

WorkFirst Values

- Work is the best avenue to break the cycle of poverty for families.
- Parents have a responsibility to take care of and provide for their children.
- The community, with the support of the state, has a responsibility to help low-income families.
- Every citizen in the state has the responsibility for the safety of our children.
- We all must be accountable in carrying out our parts of the program if we are to achieve success.

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Overview

WorkFirst parents will participate in a Comprehensive Evaluation (CE) provided by WorkFirst partners. This new evaluation process is designed to engage parents in the most appropriate activities to move them quickly toward employment and self-sufficiency.

Primary objectives of the Comprehensive Evaluation:

- Increased parent involvement in developing their plan for participation, resulting in more parent buy-in and better results
- Better information about parents' skills and abilities and quicker placement in an employment pathway
- More objective decision making based on clearer program criteria
- More consistency in how the program operates across the state through stronger program standards

The Comprehensive Evaluation will be a key tool in leading parents directly to employment. Job search will continue to be the most appropriate pathway for the majority of parents. For other parents, the Comprehensive Evaluation will lead to employment through education or Community Jobs. In some instances parents will receive services to help resolve issues while participating in work related activities.

Description of the Comprehensive Evaluation elements

- **Foundation:** Conducted by a DSHS WorkFirst Program Specialist, the foundation gathers family information and circumstances that can impact the parent's participation and contribute to the development of an employment plan. It is similar to the current Screening and Evaluation. Parents who are pregnant or have issues such as family violence or substance abuse will be referred to a social worker for an assessment as part of the Comprehensive Evaluation.
- **Education:** Conducted by community and technical college staff, this section of the Comprehensive Evaluation examines a parent's educational background and interests and uses the CASAS appraisal of basic skill levels to contribute to the employment plan.
- **Work Skills:** Conducted by an Employment Security WorkSource Specialist, the Work Skills evaluation examines work skills, interests and values and ties these to local labor market information to define career options and choices.
- **Employment Plan:** Based on information gathered from the foundation, education and work skills elements of the Comprehensive Evaluation, ESD staff, along with the parent, will complete an Employment Plan and make recommendations for employment pathway activities.
- **Plan Review and IRP Development:** Together with the parent, the CSD case manager will review the employment plan, consider the recommendations, special records and other relevant information and develop the Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP).

Partnership and communication will be essential to the Comprehensive Evaluation process. The information gained during the CE will be available to all evaluation partners in eJAS.